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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses: (a) problems in the education of native Americans caused by prejudice and the coercive assimilation policy of the federal government, and (b) the need for improvement of education for Indians. The prime requisites for change must be generated in a climate of willingness on the part of educational institutions to assume responsibility of their role as change agents and validate the definition of educational expectations, needs, and priorities as defined by the Indian community. Those definitions of educational needs by the Indian community should then be processed into existing teacher training programs as viable and essential components in the teacher training process. One of the most comprehensive models that deal with the training of teachers for the enthnically different child is being developed at the Institute for Cultural Pluralism, San Diego State University. It is composed of four basic components: (a) philosophy of education for the culturally and linguistically different, (b) sociocultural awareness in the home and community, (c) oral language and assessment techniques, and (d) diagnostic and prescriptive strategies. The competency statements of this program are included in the paper, as is a brief bibliography. (HMD)

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POSITION PAPER

A NEED FOR A COMPETENCY BASED TEACHER EDUCATION FOR NATIVE AMERICANS

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Education has borne the major thrust of the challenge which contemporary human issues have put to social institutions. Among various social concerns, it is the issue of the education of the Native American Indian which has levelled the most persistent and unresolved challenge. The challenge has not been completely ignored as the records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the public school programs attest. However, as the statistics of Indian education failure testify, the challenge has yet gone unmatched.

The source of the unmet challenge has consistently eluded educators. An effective strategy for educating Indian children has not yet been found. This situation exists despite the implementation of a wide variety of programs and approaches. However, as we examine the philosophy which sponsors such programs, we may begin to discern the patently self-defeating structure on which they are founded. That philosophy, so forcefully projected onto the American Indian is one of assimilation into the mainstream of American life and a ubiguitous denigration of Indianess that is perpetuated within American society and educational institutions.

In his poem, "The Lavender Kitten" Alonzo Lopez, a young Papago poet from Pima County, Arizona eloquently brings into

focus the feelings of the American Indian and his abortive struggle to attain that elusive place that society dictates he must achieve.

Miles and miles of pasture
rolled on before me.
Covered with grass and clover
dyed pink, white and blue.
At the edge of the fluctuating
sea of watercolors
Sat a lavender kitten.
Its fur glinted from an oscillating
ray of pink.
Quivered gently at the touch of a
swirling blue breeze.
Its emerald eyes glittered
And gazed blindly at the lighting
and fading sky of hazy red,
Yellow, white, and blue.
My heart knocked within my chest.
I must have the lavender kitten!
I ran across the multi-colored field,
my arms reaching forward.
Time slowed.
I tried to run faster
but moved twice as slowly.
The blue breeze circled and tightened
around me.
Holding me back.
The kitten rose and stretched
sending lavender mist
Swimming in every direction
It turned and started away
in huge, slow strides.
I followed and,
by a shimmering prism lake,
I came within reach of the kitten.
I offered my hand
and the kitten edged away,
Farther and farther.
Then the lake turned from crystal
to deep purple.
I looked around.
The colored began to melt.
The red sun turned to a dull grey.
The colored-filled sky turned to black.
The grass and clover began
to wither and die.

I looked down into the pool before me.
There, at the bottom of
the orchid glass cage,
Lay the lavender kitten (1).

The scourge of Indianess addressed within these lines unsheath a deeper tragedy. Beautiful words betray obcene genocide; the lavender kitten becomes the ultimate and unobtainable goal of assimilation to be grasped after and made a personal coup, the prism lake - so like a well-honed knife, surely, swiftly turns to the deep purple of blood, the edge so sharp the Indian hardly knows that the lavender kitten is really he who is dead.

The deeper tragedy reflected in Lopez's words lie in their oppressive reality. The American Indian has not, and cannot cease to be what and who he is, because when he does it means he is dead.

But to remain Indian, is intricately woven into the American social context as somehow undesirable and evil. The disparaging connotation of being Indian is molded into our laws, our religions, our language and our system of education. It is this latter condition which is here indicated as the source of Indian educational failure.

In a report by Bruce Gardner, he states that one of the underlying causes of the Indian child's failure in school is that the educational policy for the American Indian child has been based on the principle that the Indian's salvation lies in his ceasing to be what and who he is. Essentially, the message communicated to the Indian child is that his worth is contingent on

The extent to which he can approximate whiteness.

This same message is projected within the various programs which have been spawned to educate and remediate the Indian educational failure which has been fostered by that very message.

The cycle of failure faced by Indian children in schools, whether federal or public, may well continue for years to come, because typically, the approach to Indian education has been consistently focused on compensatory education and need for the Indian child to assimilate into the larger and dominant society without regard to the child's rich cultural background and the learning styles which he has already acquired. Indian culture has been presumed to be at best, irrelevant, but more commonly disfunctional vis-a-vis the education process.

When this orientation is carried to the extent of communicating to the child that his adequacy is contingent upon diminishing that which is most natural to him, it cannot but have a profoundly crippling effect, if not indeed complete destruction, of the child.

Specifically, this negative valuation projected onto the Indian child develops feelings of anomie which are highly psychologically charged. To withdraw and fail academically remains the only recourse for personal survival left to the Indian child.

As previously stated education has not met the Indian child's educational needs and is being "called on the carpet" for its failure.

Deutsch made this point quite cogently in stating, "Education

is being asked to compensate not only for its own failure but for society's as well. Education's fault has been its inability to identify its own problems and its moral callousness in allowing massive failure and miserable educational conditions to exist for a substantial segment of the school population (2)."

According to Spindler, the school is the chief vehicle of socialization, within it are designed the programs of study that contain those areas of experience and content which are essential to the development of the desired characteristics of behavior selected from the total range of possibilities which exist in the culture. He suggests that intelligent selection can be based only on considerable cultural insight and understanding (3). This particularly is true for the Native American child. The special subcommittee on Indian Education states that the Indian's image of himself depends, in that last analysis, upon the image held by the dominant white society (4).

Most theorists agree that feelings of self worth and adequacy within an individual is largely a learned phenomenon in which an individual develops an image or concept of himself by incorporating sources of data from significant others in his environment. It is as Sullivan puts it, a product of the "reflected appraisals (5)" of the society in which the individual lives.

Then indeed, if this brand of discrimination and rejection has been fostered unwittingly by the educational system, then it must be openly admitted to and new educational premises must be reconstructed. Fromm offers this reassurance "As long as we can

think of alternatives, we are not lost, as long as we can consult together and plan together, we can hope (6)". It is in effect what the Indian community is asking.

One of the most positive educational alternatives that must be considered by educational institutions, particularly on the University level, is the rapidly developing Indian ethic that began to emerge in the late 1960's. That ethic reflects the Indian pride movement and the search for self determination. The emergence has the potential for reversing the Indian educational failure and the accompanying derogation of the Indian which has been promulgated within American social institutions in general and most grossly within American education institutions. It is also the source from which is developing mounting pressure for the development and inclusion of Indian culture and history as a relevant and essential area for curriculum development. Most crucial in all of this is the reversal of the deficiency orientation of education programs for Indian students.

Therein lies the potential for making school a positive learning experience for the Indian child and a viable process for enriching the curriculum for all children.

The educational challenge is clear. Education institutions must respond to the challenge if it is to survive and continue to serve society. The emerging Indian cultural positives must be encompassed and used as a major defining theme for the development of successful Indian education programs and the establishment of clearly defined tasks that will enable the Indian to become part

of and to utilize the school system as a meaningful resource to sustain the life style that meets their social and economic needs.

To fully grasp the complexity and the enormity of the task involved in Indian educational change it is necessary to review the past. The First Annual Report to the Congress of the United States by the National Advisory Council on Indian Education gives a concise and accurate summary of historical findings from Indian Education National Tragedy - A National Challenge:

I. POLICY FAILURE

The dominant policy of the Federal Government toward the American Indian has been one of coercive assimilation. The policy resulted in:

A. The destruction and disorganization of Indian communities and individuals.

B. A desperately severe and self-perpetuating cycle of poverty for most Indians.

C. The growth of a large, ineffective, and self-perpetuating bureaucracy which retards the elimination of Indian poverty.

D. A waste of Federal appropriations.

II. NATIONAL ATTITUDES

The coercive assimilation policy has had a strong negative influence on national attitudes. It has resulted in:

A. A nation that is massively uninformed and misinformed about the American Indian, and his past and present.

B. Prejudice, racial intolerance, and discrimination towards Indians far more widespread and serious than generally recognized.

III. EDUCATION FAILURE

The coercive assimiliation policy has had disastrous effect on the education of Indian children. It has resulted in:

A. The classroom and the school becoming a kind of battleground where the Indian child attempts to protect his integrity and identify as an individual by defeating the purposes of the school.

B. Schools which fail to understand or adapt to, and in fact often denigrate c[illegible]al differences.

C. Schools which blame their own [illegible]ure on the Indian student and reinforce h[illegible]efensiveness.

D. Schools which fail to recognize the importance and validity of the Indian community. The community and child retaliate by treating the school as an alien institution.

E. A dismal record of absenteeism, dropouts, negative self-image, low achievement, and ultimately, academic failure for many Indian children.

F. A perpetuation of the cycle of poverty which undermines the success of all other Federal programs.

IV. CAUSES OF THE POLICY FAILURE

The coercive assimilation has two primary historical roots:

A. A continuous desire to exploit, and expropriate Indian land and physical resources.

B. A self-righteous intolerance of tribal communities and cultural differences (7).

It is evident that an institution that has historically perpetuated such destructive racism against a group of people cannot of its own volition define the needs of that particular group. Rather, definition for change must emanate from that group that has been discriminated against, preyed upon, and robbed of much of its human dignity, only then can there be a drawing into full

focus the historical events, the sociological and psychological forces of the past that are the prime factors in setting up the forces that are waiting to shape the Indian students behavior and attitudes that make him what he uniquely is.

The prime requisites for change must be generated in a climate of a willingness on the part of educational institutions to assume responsibility of their roll as change agents and validate the definition of educational expectations, needs and priorities as defined by the Indian community.

Those definitions of educational needs by the Indian community should then be processed into existing teacher training programs as viable and essential componenets in the teacher training process. To lack the knowledge of cultural, sociological and historical perspectives of man is to be without an understanding of how man behaves and the rationale for his behavior; it is then that education becomes a process of trial and error classification of professional endeavor. This is particularly true when learning constructs insist on attending a single majority cultural orientation. The teacher as a practitioner should be trained in the process of transposing the environment of the Indian child into principles and concepts that are necessary for that child to deal with the learning process and to be successful in it.

One of the most comprehensive models that deal with the training of teachers for the ethnically different child is being developed at the Institute for Cultural Pluralism, San Diego State University. It is a competency based teacher training program that

parallels the positive Indian thrust for an effective educational intervention strategy.

The Community, Home, Cultural Awareness and Language Training (CHCALT) model is composed of four basic components:

1. Philosphy of Education for the Culturally and Linguistically different.
2. Sociocultural Awareness - Home and Community Based.
3. Oral Language and Assessment Techniques.
4. Diagnostic and Prescriptive Strategies.

The salient features of each of the four components of the CHCALT model are outlined below. A list of the specific competencies considered essential for achieving the goals of each component is followed by a rationale for the program component.

PHASE I: Philosophy of Education for the Culturally and Linguistically Different

This component forms the philosophical basis for the professional preparation as a whole. It is designed to enable candidates to achieve competence in viewing culture from the perspective of each of the six academic disciplines shown below. Its purpose is to provide a theoretical framework for discerning and understanding the living and learning styles of their pupils.

A. The ability to view a culture from a anthropological perspective using a holistic multidisciplinary approach to the study of man.

B. The ability to view a culture from a sociological perspective.

C. The ability to view a culture from a psychological

perspective.

D. The ability to view culture from an aesthetic perspective.

E. The ability to view culture from an linguistic perspective.

F. The ability to view culture from an historical perspective.

In order to provide candidates with a multi-disciplinary framework for viewing and participating in a particular community, culture will be studies as patterned way of behavior which define a group and hold it together, positive and negative values for given behaviors, and needs for acceptance within the framework defined by the group. The aesthetic values, the language values, the way in which speech and self-expression are valued within a culture, and the groups' own sense of its past will all be looked at by the candidates as a means for understanding of the target culture by studying the historical past of the particular culture from the community's own perspective.

Candidates will be able to look at themselves as members of their own culture and at the members of other cultures as each having learned a prescribed set of behaviors, roles and values. Candidates will understand the magnitude of the learning which any child has achieved and will achieve independent of school. Candidates will confront the need for integrating the learning process which is to be facilitated by the school with the learning process which is a central part

of the individual's life within any given culture or cultures.

PHASE II: Sociocultural Awareness

The sociocultural awareness component is completely community based and incorporates field activities which will provide candidates with opportunity to observe and directly experience life in a community of the culture they select. As the competencies below indicate, the candidates' knowledge of culture will be integrated with an understanding of the home and community context of culture and with an understanding of how they relate to other cultures within the framework of their own cultural background.

A. Home-Family Relations

Knowledge of the contemporary life styles and culture of the target population selected by the candidate.

B. Community

Knowledge of the functions and relationships among the community, schools, and the other institutions in the community selected by the candidate.

C. Culture

1. Knowledge of the cultural and historical development of the target population selected.

2. Knowledge of the cultural and historical heritage of the general culture.

3. Knowledge of the main features of the dominant society.

4. Knowledge of the cultural and historical representation of that target culture selected.

D. Personal Awareness (Self-Development)

1. Knowledge of skills in interpersonal effectiveness and personal development.

2. The ability to deal with conflict and confrontation.

3. An awareness of self in relationship to one's own culture and to other cultures.

Candidates will make individual choices of specialization in terms of a particular target culture, and field experiences will provide opportunity for observation and participation in the current life styles of the culture. Along with customs, attitudes and values which are characteristic of the culture, candidates will observe family relationships and child-rearing practices. They will also study the historical development of the culture.

The emphasis in this component is to provide skills that will enable candidates to communicate in a realistic manner with the target population and to develop positive attitudes about the people and their living styles.

A strong awareness of self and development of skills in inter-personal relations and communication are also an important part of the sociocultural awareness component. Not only will these skills enable the candidate to communicate more effectively with the community, but they will provide a background for creating an environment in the classroom which will lead to pupils' achievement of improved skills in interpersonal relationships, self-development, and positive

self-concept.

PHASE III: Oral Language and Assessment Techniques

Equipped with a multi-disciplinary perspective of culture and actual experience in the life of the target community, candidates can achieve in phase three of the model a thorough understanding of the cultural and community context of children's language and the role of language as a means of communication, transmittal of culture and socio-cultural identification. Competence in the four areas listed below is stressed:

A. Communication

The ability to conduct classroom and school activities in the target language and to communicate effectively with members of the community in the target language, as appropriate.

B. Social Function

To know the functions and variations of regional and social dialects within language systems and be familiar with dialect features.

C. Characteristics

To know the linguistic features which comprise the target language system and how they are contrasted with parallel features of the dominant language.

D. Diagnosis of Differences, Dominance and Comprehension

The ability to diagnose and evaluate individual language learning needs in a bilingual situation - including testing procedures and methods.

A knowledge of the linguistic characteristics of the target language as compared to the characteristics of standard

American English is a prerequisite to oral language assessment as a further foundation of evaluation. Candidates must know how to use language effectively and must be familiar with the form that language takes in a given community. They must know the social characteristics of the language and be able to use the oral language of the target community in a manner which recognizes its sociolinguistic requirements. The component will further provide candidates with a positive attitude toward language differences and enable them to utilize the language children bring to school as a basis for expanding their linguistic ability and reinforcing a positive concept of self, home and community through that language.

PHASE IV: Diagnostic and Prescriptive Strategies

This component allows candidates to translate the knowledge and skills gained in the first three components into specific classroom strategies and activities. As the competencies listed below indicate, effective learning experiences for linguistically and culturally different children are based on individualized teaching strategies which can only be accomplished through a series of techniques designed for each individual child.

A. Individualized Instruction

1. An awareness of how Bilingual/Bicultural influences affect and differentiate learning styles.

2. A knowledge of how home and community environment affect and differentiate learning behavior and styles.

3. A knowledge of how individualized instruction accomodates different learning styles.

B. Small Groups and Peer Teaching

The ability to utilize paraprofessionals, community members and community resources in the diversification of classroom strategies and the facilitation of individualized and group instruction.

C. Performance Criteria

The ability to establish realistic criteria for performance in a Bilingual/Cross-Cultural classroom.

D. Relevant Diagnosis

The ability to devise criterion - referenced test to evaluate an individual student's ability in terms of established criteria specifically designed for culturally and linguistically different children.

E. Strategies: Language Arts, Self Concept, Social Studies

The ability to devise teaching strategies and materials which are culturally and linguistically appropriate and which will lead to the achievement of criteria specifically designed for culturally and linguistically different children.

F. Relevant Materials

The comprehensive knowledge of recent research findings, available materials, and curricula for bilingual/cross-cultural teaching techniques, and how to adapt and utilize these resources.

Individualized instruction is essential in providing learning experiences which will be meaningful for culturally and linguistically different children. Not only do these children come to school with a wide range of linguistic ability and varying degrees of

bilingualism or bidialectism, but each individual child has his own set of learning behaviors and styles which cannot be accommodated with one method of instruction.

Candidates will study how home, and cultural and linguistic factors influence learning stages, abilities, and behaviors of children in order to gain skills in identifying these patterns in individual children.

In order to develop skills in adapting and devising materials for individualized instruction, candidates are provided with an opportunity to learn competency based techniques in establishing criteria, designing diagnostic criterion, referenced tests, and developing instructional strategies based on these instruments which will provide meaningful and effective learning experiences for individual and group situations. Candidates will also make studies of current research findings on culturally and linguistically different children and become familiar with existing materials and curricula designed for the bilingual/cross-cultural classroom (8).

Before viewing teacher competencies specifically for the Native American segment it must be remembered that one of the fallacies and the basic underlying assumption of Indian education has been to lump the needs of all Native Americans into one global definition. Rather, it must be understood that each Indian tribal group has its own language, its own economics, its own philosophy, its own psychology, its own religious base and its own history of

origin. These components inextricabally become the base of any particular tribal culture. Conclusion must then be drawn that, if teaching competencies are to be defined they must come from that target group. Communication is the vital link in the building of a workable teacher training program.

To explore further the need for implementation of a competency based teacher education program, a yet unpublished study in California conducted in ten school districts statewide revealed many of the reasons why the Native American student has not succeeded in the educational process of that state.

The study was based upon 19 concerns that were identified by the Indian community at large as an important factor in the education of the Indian child in the public school system. Those concerns were constructed into a questionnaire and administered in ten school districts that serve a high Indian student population. Participating in that questionnaire were 141 Indian students, 120 parents and 402 teachers and administrators.

The F test was administered to the data and results show teachers felt:

A. Indian students should be regarded the same as all other students.

B. Not important for school to identify Indian students as a group.

C. The childs Indian background was an influence in the childs' success/failure in school.

D. Not important for the Indian child to speak his language.

E. If an Indian student is having difficulty in school,

perhaps the Bureau choice would be a better choice.

F. Lack of communication between teachers and Indian students.

G. Even less communication between teachers and Indian parents.

H. There is little value of a home visit by the teacher if the student is having difficulty.

I. Felt there was only a small degree of discrimination against the Indian student by other students, staff or administration.

Teachers also felt that it is important for teachers:

A. To know local Indian tribal groups.

B. To know local Indian culture.

C. To have Indian clubs on campus.

D. To have Indian students participate in sports events and extra-curricular activities.

E. To have the Indian child retain his Indian culture.

Based on the analysis of data such as this, the following competencies for teacher education is offered.

SPECIFIC COMPETENCIES FOR TEACHERS OF NATIVE AMERICANS

Anthropological Perspectives

1. Demonstrate knowledge of Indian tribalism, the vast cultural differences between the Indian tribes of the United States, what forces, economically, politically or other that brought about those vast differences.

2. Demonstrate a knowledge of the United States Indian Reservation; their locations, the historical bases of the local reservations in particular.

3. Demonstrate knowledge of the Indians unique position

with the United States Government that no other group possesses.

4. Demonstrate knowledge of the various language families of the American Indian.

Sociological Perspective

1. Demonstrate an understanding the nature of a cooperative society as opposed to a competitive society.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of controls imposed by the Indian community on its members.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the Indians Civil Rights as opposed to the Civil Rights of other ethnic groups.
4. Demonstrate understanding of the extend family as opposed to the nuclear family.
5. Demonstrate an understanding why the Indian still clings to Indian values, morals and traditions.
6. Demonstrate an understanding of the causes of resentment on the part of the Indian against the present social system.
7. Demonstrate knowledge of the vast contributions the American Indian has made to present day society.
8. Demonstrate knowledge of why the Indian has found himself locked into the cycle of poverty.
9. Demonstrate a knowledge of the Indian's relationship with the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Aesthetic and Religious Perspectives

1. Understanding that aesthetic values and religious beliefs have a very close relationship many times being one and the same.
2. Understanding that stories, folkways and customs are the basis for teaching the morality and laws of a tribal group.
3. Understanding that leadership both religious and secular are intrically bound together.

Linguistic Perspective

Understand how language represents the functions of a culture. How different languages forces those "speakers into two different images of reality (9)".

Diagnostic and Prescriptive Strategies

A teacher must understand behavorial tendencies such as the following. For different areas of the country they may be different, but are usually present in some degree:

1. Understand that Indians and non-Indians have different referents and perceptions to humor. These are antagonistic to each other. Indian humor is not funny to non-Indians. Indians play activities (teasing) and story telling (wild make believe) are part of Indian culture. This humor is perceived as troublesome and disruptive to non-Indians. The teacher should be aware that this is a possible source of cultural misinterpretation and conflict.

2. Understand that Indian students have respect for and respond to authority. But response by learners to school authorities tends to be fearful. Indians tend to withdraw when faced with school authority.

3. An understanding that the Indian learner is taught at home to be independent and self-sufficient. Taught to be quiet and dignified. Does not boast about achievements.

4. An understanding that Indian students prefer to work at their own pace. Do not like group activities which are competitive in nature. Teachers must understand the standard group instructional mode for schools produces predictable academic failure for Indian learners.

5. An understanding that Indian children are taught to be quiet and dignified. Finds it difficult to respond to non-Indian because of built-up distrust. Status and position does not impress the Indian, each person is judged on personal merits.

6. An understanding that Indian students are very sensitive to personal dignification requirements. Negative remarks about clothes, home or anything pertaining to Indians produces withdrawal and negative feelings. Becomes progressively more intense with age.

7. Understanding that the Indian learner feels its important to show what you are and what you can do, but not in a boastful way. Have special concerns with pride for

being "an Indian". Have strong feelings about the superior culture of the Indian.

8. An understanding that Indian pride is severely injured by the negative approach the school uses in dealing with American Indian in history.
9. An understanding of the dislike of the Indian learner for competition expected in group academic environment. Will resist and withdraw when pushed.
10. An understanding of why the Indian learner develops feelings of rejection starting at lower grades based on perceived rejection by non-Indian peers, by teachers, by authority figures, by community.

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